Biodiversity Enhancement on development sites guidance

The Natural Environment Team and Energy Team have revised the Planning Advice for enhancing biodiversity covering all scales of development. For small sites, the guidance includes an easy-to-use assessment procedure and form which will enable the assessment and recording of the proposed enhancement to be submitted with a planning application.

This guidance is now available online within our planning advice section:

- PA2023-10 (revised) – Biodiversity Enhancement on development sites (November 2025) and,
- PA203-10 Appendix 1 – Biodiversity Enhancement for smaller scale developments (assessment form and tables for submitting with a planning application)

It is hoped that this planning advice will provide a useful structure for assessing biodiversity enhancement and your feedback and comments are always welcome. It is anticipated that after a period of usage and collated feedback the guidance will be updated and reissued.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on your experience of Aberdeenshire Council Planning Service, via the National Planning Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey.

The survey should only take 5 minutes of your time, and all responses are confidential and help us to improve our service.

Link to: Take the survey

The survey is open from 1 October 2025 to 9 January 2026.
This is the second year of this survey which is co-ordinated by the National Planning Improvement Team based in the Improvement Service. Please find the link to view the results from the first National Customer and Stakeholder Survey 2024 for all 34 planning authorities: National Planning Improvement Customer and Stakeholder Survey Results: National Analysis.
The feedback is used to help planning authorities gain a better understanding of the challenges faced in providing high levels of customer care and satisfaction. This is part of the wider work being undertaken through the pilot National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) which has already identified actions to improve in this area.

Planning and Private Water Supplies Guidance

The Environmental Health Team have developed guidance to set out the process to determine whether a water supply is suitable for the proposed development: Planning guidance: private water supplies - Aberdeenshire Council

Discretionary Charging

A review of discretionary charging is being conducted by the Planning Service with the following under consideration:

- Request for Non-Material Variation

- Surcharge for Retrospective applications
- Reduced Fees - Not for profit or social enterprises
- Pre-application enquiries

Further engagement and information on discretionary charging will be circulated in 2026. Refer to Scottish Government Planning Circular for background information: Planning Circular 2/2025 - Fees for Applications.

Validation

As discussed at the Agent Forum (November 2025) further information, self-help videos and training will be organised in 2026 to assist with improving validation statistics.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Kind regards
Mairi Stewart
Planning Manager